

The background of the slide features a large, faint, circular seal of the State of Indiana. The seal contains the text "THE STATE OF INDIANA" at the top and "1816" at the bottom. In the center of the seal is a landscape with a figure, possibly a Native American, and a plow. The seal is rendered in a light gray color against a dark gray background.

Rural Roads

Pathways to Improving Higher Education Attainment

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Indiana Commission for Higher Education

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BIO



- ▶ Born and Raised in Dekalb County, Indiana
- ▶ Graduated from Purdue University in May 2020
- ▶ BA in Global Studies, Minor in Political Science
- ▶ CHE VISTA Member – June 2020-June 2021
- ▶ Starting a MPA program at IU in the fall
- ▶ Became interested in rural education issues after personal experiences



INTRODUCTION

- ▶ The Need
- ▶ The Goal
- ▶ Choosing Rural Counties
- ▶ Building Data Dashboards
- ▶ Breakdown of Each County
 - ▶ Noble County
 - ▶ Blackford County
 - ▶ Owen County
 - ▶ Starke County
- ▶ Performing Outreach During COVID-19
- ▶ Reoccurring Themes
- ▶ What Makes the Perfect Rural County Partner?
- ▶ Key Takeaways
- ▶ The Way Forward

THE NEED

- ▶ Rural students face unique challenges due to their geographic location such as:
 - ▶ Lack of access to reliable internet
 - ▶ Less outreach from higher education institutions
 - ▶ Higher rates of poverty
- ▶ Rural students in Indiana are less likely to enroll in college directly after high school at only the rate of 59% compared to the statewide average of 63%.
- ▶ Only 19% of rural Americans hold a bachelor's degree which is lower than the nationwide average of 33%.

THE GOAL

- ▶ **60% postsecondary completion rates for all Hoosiers by 2025**
- ▶ Target four Indiana counties which have seen a three-year decline in college enrollment rates and continue to see low college completion rates in comparison to their counterparts



CHOOSING RURAL COUNTIES

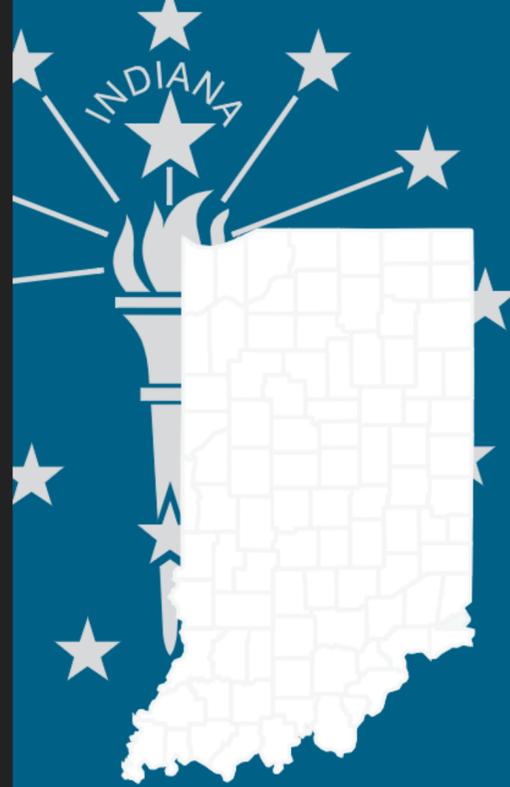
- ▶ Which counties did I prioritize?
 - ▶ Counties which show at least a three-year decline in college enrollment rates between 2016-2018
 - ▶ Counties with low college completion rates compared to the statewide average
 - ▶ Counties which show a demonstrated need in the data collected (high poverty rates, low SSP completion, high minority population, etc.)



BUILDING DATA DASHBOARDS

- ▶ Questions to ask:
 - ▶ What data is important for our partners?
 - ▶ What data do I need to persuade others to join our mission?
 - ▶ How do we show the importance of the data we are sharing?





State Statistics:

- Current Population: **6,691,878**
- Median Household Income: **\$54,123**
- Youth Poverty: **24.48%**
- Households with Computer Devices: **85.49%**
- Households with Internet Subscriptions: **75.86%**

Dashboard Report: State of Indiana

College Readiness

High School Graduation Rate

87.29%

Scholar Success Program (SSP) Completion

60%

SSP Activity with lowest completion rate:

- College Success
- College Applications

Meeting Early College Success Criteria

47%

Current College Enrollment

61%

3-Year College Enrollment Decline

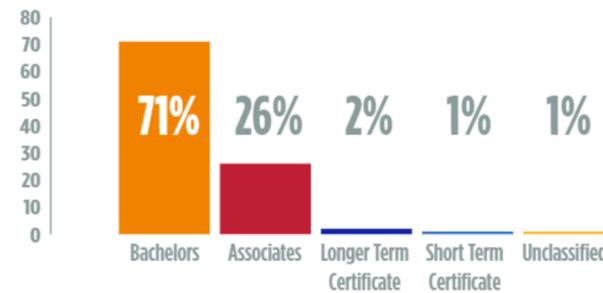
-3%

Postsecondary Options

Associate or Higher Degree

39%

Pursuing Degree Level



Enrollment Status

Full-Time: **85%**
Part-Time: **15%**

Top Majors

1. STEM
2. Health
3. Business and Communication

Total Next Level Jobs/Workforce Ready Grant Applicants

65,476

Postsecondary Institution Info

Most Popular Institutions:

- 1 Indiana University-Bloomington
- 2 Purdue University-West Lafayette
- 3 Indiana University Purdue University-Indianapolis

Workforce

Average Hourly Wage:

\$19.84

Entry Level Wage:

\$20,414

Labor Force Participation:

60.69%

Sources



• https://public.tableau.com/profile/che_staff#!/vizhome/CollegeReadiness2020/Story



• <https://www.in.gov/cct/-datadisplay.htm>

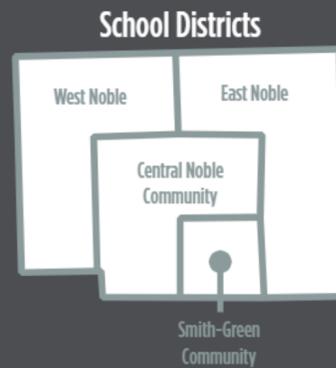
RURAL ROADS: PATHWAYS TO HIGHER EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

NOBLE COUNTY



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HIGHER EDUCATION

Dashboard Report: Noble County Indiana



County Background:

- Current Population: **47,532**
- Median Household Income: **\$52,764**
- Youth Poverty: **19.08%**
- Households with Computer Devices: **85.53%**
- Households with Internet Subscriptions: **76.12%**

College Readiness

High School Graduation Rate

90.06%

Scholar Success Program (SSP) Completion

66%

SSP Activity with lowest completion rate:

- Filing the FAFSA
- College Applications

Meeting Early College Success Criteria

45%

Current College Enrollment

50%

3-Year College Enrollment Decline

-10%

Postsecondary Options

Associate or Higher Degree

26%

Pursuing Degree Level

Degree Level	Percentage
Bachelors	67%
Associates	26%
Longer Term Certificate	4%
Short Term Certificate	3%
Unclassified	1%

Enrollment Status

Full-Time: **83%**

Part-Time: **17%**

Top Majors

1. STEM
2. Health
3. Business and Communication

Total Next Level Jobs/Workforce Ready Grant Applicants

464

NextLevel Jobs INDIANA

Postsecondary Institution Info

	Most Popular Institutions:	Distance from Largest City:
1	Ivy Tech Community College-Fort Wayne	21 Miles/ 41 Minutes
2	Purdue University-Fort Wayne	26 Miles/42 Minutes
3	Indiana University Purdue University-Indianapolis	150 Miles/2 Hr 30 Min

Workforce

Average Hourly Wage: **\$19.45**

Entry Level Wage: **\$22,6131**

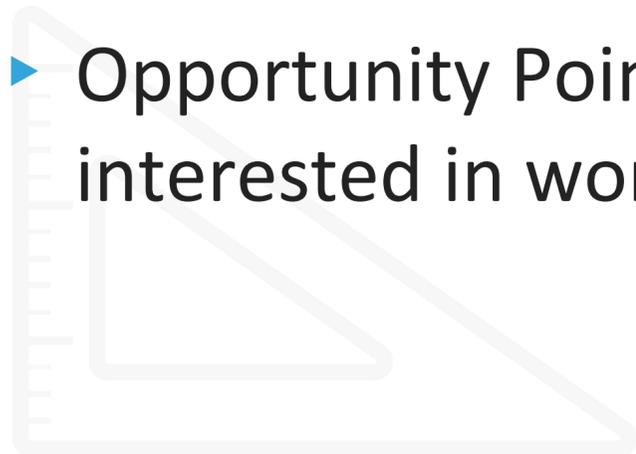
Labor Force Participation: **60.26%**

Top Employers

1. LSC Communications
2. Kraft Heinz Co
3. Busche Enterprise Div Inc
4. Guardian Industries Corp
5. Silgan Plastics LLC
6. TI Automotive
7. Bosch Automotive Motor Systems

NOBLE COUNTY

- ▶ Had an established regional coalition (Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership)
- ▶ Preexisting partnerships from Padres Estrellas efforts in the region
 - ▶ One in 10 students are of Hispanic origin in Noble County
- ▶ Many institutions actively interested in working in this county
 - ▶ Ivy Tech, College 529, Impact Institute, Dekko Foundation, The Crew YC, Padres Estrellas
- ▶ Opportunity Point: Create more interconnected partnerships when many institutions are interested in working within a county



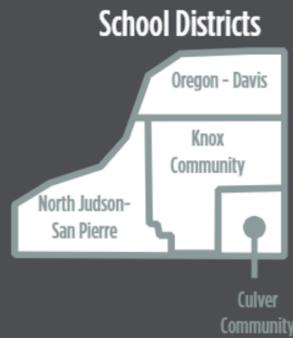
RURAL ROADS: PATHWAYS TO HIGHER EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

STARKE COUNTY



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Dashboard Report: Starke County Indiana



County Background:

- Current Population: 22,935
- Median Household Income: \$46,940
- Youth Poverty: 32.66%
- Households with Computer Devices: 80.68%
- Households with Internet Subscriptions: 68.15%

College Readiness

High School Graduation Rate

94.41%

Scholar Success Program (SSP) Completion

60%

SSP Activity with lowest completion rate:

- **Filing the FAFSA**

Meeting Early College Success Criteria

45%

Current College Enrollment

45%

3-Year College Enrollment Decline

-7%

Postsecondary Options

Associate or Higher Degree

23%

Pursuing Degree Level



Enrollment Status

Full-Time: **81%**
Part-Time: **19%**

Top Majors

1. Health
2. STEM
3. Arts and Humanities

Total Next Level Jobs/Workforce Ready Grant Applicants

256



Postsecondary Institution Info

	Most Popular Institutions:	Distance from Largest City:
1	Ivy Tech Community College-Valparaiso	30 Miles/34 Minutes
2	Indiana University-South Bend	50.6 Miles/54 Minutes
3	Ball State University	134 Miles/2 Hours 27 Minutes

Workforce

Average Hourly Wage:

\$15.13

Entry Level Wage:

\$19,528

Labor Force Participation:

54.56%

Top Employers

1. Pathfinder Services Inc
2. MPI Indiana Fineblanking
3. Knox Community School Corp
4. Knox Comm Elementary School
5. Starke Hospital

STARKE COUNTY

- ▶ Part of a regional partnership (Northwest Indiana)
- ▶ Surrounding counties have a lot of energy
 - ▶ Lake County – GEAR UP
 - ▶ Elkhart County – manufacturing fair
- ▶ Benefited from a more regional point of view
- ▶ Fall 2020-School and Community Partnership Grant recipient
- ▶ Opportunity Point: Better alignment of college resources with community foundation

RURAL ROADS: PATHWAYS TO HIGHER EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

BLACKFORD COUNTY



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Dashboard Report: Blackford County Indiana



School Districts



County Background:

- Current Population: **11,930**
- Median Household Income: **\$42,636**
- Youth Poverty: **30.03%**
- Households with Computer Devices: **81.02%**
- Households with Internet Subscriptions: **66.61%**

College Readiness

High School Graduation Rate

93.8%

Scholar Success Program (SSP) Completion

38%

SSP Activity with lowest completion rate:

- **Scholarship Search**

Meeting Early College Success Criteria

31%

Current College Enrollment

41%

3-Year College Enrollment Decline

-15%

Postsecondary Options

Associate or Higher Degree

25%

Pursuing Degree Level



Enrollment Status

Full-Time: **89%**
Part-Time: **11%**

Top Majors

1. Health
2. STEM
3. Arts and Humanities

Total Next Level Jobs/Workforce Ready Grant Applicants

111

NextLevel Jobs INDIANA

Postsecondary Institution Info

	Most Popular Institutions:	Distance from Largest City:
1	Ivy Tech Community College-Marion	17 Miles/23 Minutes
2	Ball State University	19 Miles/27 Minutes
3	Ivy Tech Community College-Muncie	19 Miles/28 Minutes

Workforce

Average Hourly Wage:

\$16.70

Entry Level Wage:

\$20,557

Labor Force Participation:

53.22%

Top Employers

1. Ardagh Group
2. 3M Co
3. BRC Rubber Group
4. 5 Star Commercial Roofing
5. Stanley Engineered Fastening
6. Miller's Merry Manor



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of 4



BLACKFORD COUNTY

- ▶ County with the most need
- ▶ Not a part of a Career Connections and Talent (CCT) partnership
- ▶ One of three Indiana counties to experience a loss in nonprofits (IU Center for Rural Engagement)
- ▶ Only 68.5% of households have access to reliable internet
- ▶ Despite efforts to reach out to possible partners in the county, very little was received in response
- ▶ Opportunity Point: How do you reach counties which have been resistant to letting outside institutions in?



RURAL ROADS: PATHWAYS TO HIGHER EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

OWEN COUNTY



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ADDING A COUNTY

- ▶ New questions to ask when choosing a new county:
 - ▶ Is there energy in the county to improve postsecondary enrollment rates?
 - ▶ Is there a regional coalition which is conducting work or has ties to the community?
 - ▶ Do we already have strong partnerships in the county we want to work in?



Dashboard Report: Owen County Indiana



School Districts



County Background:

- Current Population: 20,845
- Median Household Income: \$49,044
- Youth Poverty: 30.01%
- Households with Computer Devices: 77.79%
- Households with Internet Subscriptions: 64.96%

College Readiness

High School Graduation Rate

93%

Scholar Success Program (SSP) Completion

37%

SSP Activity with lowest completion rate:

• **College Application**

Meeting Early College Success Criteria

36%

Current College Enrollment

46%

3-Year College Enrollment Decline

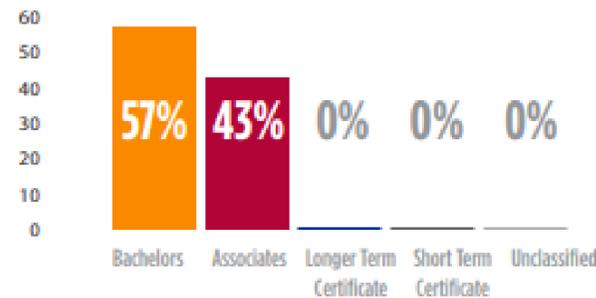
-10%

Postsecondary Options

Associate or Higher Degree

19%

Pursuing Degree Level



Enrollment Status

Full-Time: **84%**
Part-Time: **16%**

Top Majors

1. Arts and Humanities
2. STEM
3. Health

Total Next Level Jobs/Workforce Ready Grant Applicants

219

NextLevel Jobs INDIANA

Postsecondary Institution Info

	Most Popular Institutions:	Distance from Largest City:
1	Ivy Tech Community College-Bloomington	15 Miles/21 Minutes
2	Indiana State University	41.7 Miles/50 Minutes
3	Purdue University -West Lafayette	82 Miles/1 Hour 43 Minutes

Workforce

Average Hourly Wage:

\$20.20

Entry Level Wage:

\$20,555

Labor Force Participation:

51.67%

Top Employers

1. Boston Scientific Corp
2. Cook Urological Inc
3. Owen Valley High School
4. Spencer Elementary School
5. McCormick Creek Elementary

OWEN COUNTY

- ▶ In a regional partnership (Indiana Uplands)
- ▶ Had the most energy surrounding improving postsecondary enrollment rates for rural students
- ▶ Already had partners in the region who were interested in the work
 - ▶ Partnership between Edge 21 and Owen County Community Foundation
- ▶ 78.5% of students graduated with dual-credit
- ▶ 30% of Cloverdale Middle School's students (Putnam County) were from Owen County (Edge 21)
- ▶ Opportunity Point: Create stronger partnerships between those in Owen with nearby institutions



PERFORMING OUTREACH DURING COVID-19

- ▶ Positives: Expanding outreach to online sources
- ▶ Positives: Able to reach those outside of a specific region through online webinars and forums
- ▶ Challenges: More difficulty conducting outreach to those without access to reliable internet
- ▶ Challenges: More difficult to reach out to students who are not already interested in the material
- ▶ Challenges: Difficult to connect with partners and students through online means



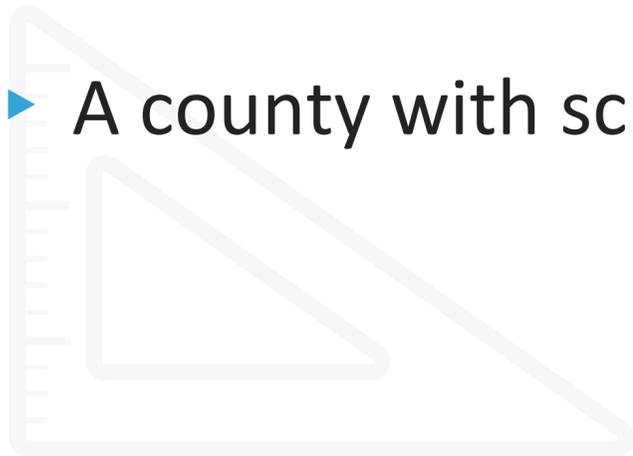
REOCCURRING THEMES

- ▶ The attitude of rural students surrounding higher education is often uninterested and disengaged
- ▶ It can be hard for the community and institutions to get access to the school
- ▶ Each community has its own challenges; no one solution fits every community
- ▶ In person delivery and strategy development are crucial for moving the process forward



WHAT MAKES THE PERFECT RURAL COUNTY PARTNER?

- ▶ A high need county
- ▶ A county which has seen a long-term decline in postsecondary enrollment
- ▶ A county with a regional partnership
- ▶ A county with preexisting partnerships
- ▶ Counties which have expressed interest in improving higher education
- ▶ A county with schools open to working with outside institutions



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ When choosing a county to begin conducting more outreach in, choose a county which is part of a regional coalition and/or already have a base motivated to improve postsecondary enrollment rates
- ▶ While some rural students lack the resources to attend college, many rural students have a neutral or negative attitude towards college
- ▶ The Commission plans to work towards reaching out to communities through leveraging in-person Commission meetings
- ▶ What can CHE, postsecondary institutions, nonprofits, and other partners do to strengthen these rural communities?

THE WAY FORWARD

- ▶ Recommendations:
- ▶ Continue to develop and use online resources after COVID-19
- ▶ Build partnerships between organizations within counties
- ▶ Develop the relationships between organizations within the county and surrounding higher education institutions (Purdue University/Indiana Uplands)
- ▶ Use the Workforce Ready Grant as a steppingstone for introducing students to postsecondary education



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